

# THE BEACON

A PAPER FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AND THE HOME

VOLUME III.

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NUMBER 28



DAM BUILT BY BEAVER IN MESA COUNTY, COLORADO.

*Courtesy of "Our Dumb Animals."*

## Life History of the Beaver.

BY H. BEDFORD-JONES.

**B**EGINNING with the earliest melting of the snow and ending with the disappearance of the ice from the lakes and rivers, the family of baby beavers gain their introduction to the wonders of nature which surround them. Earlier than this they can remember nothing more than the warm, mud-lined nest in the dark lodge where, like many other little babies, they were fed on milk. But now, when the warm sun has sent the snow from lodge-top and hillside, they are big enough to toddle around; and a little later, when the ice has gone, they are taken for a swim in the pond and allowed to crawl upon the banks and inspect the dam.

The young family usually consists of three or four, and a happy time they have, playing together in the water and roaming about the banks of the river, or pond in search of the dainty green shoots. It is not long, however, before they are led up the stream to another place, and then still farther up to other ponds where fresh delights await them in the increasing variety of fruits and plants. As the time wears on, the weather gets warmer, and their bed becomes a tuft of soft grass exposed to the silvery light of the moon.

From this they plunge to the cool depths of the still cold water for refreshing baths, their limbs and tails becoming stronger every day, while the woods afford an endless assortment of luxuries on which young

beavers can fatten and grow fast. There is no work to be done, and few enemies are to

be feared; for dreams of the hunters are unknown to the little ones, nor do the old beavers dread them at this season.

Thus the summer passes, and the baby beavers, now grown to kitten-hood,—for young beavers are called kittens, too,—think of the cosy lodge down the stream, for the nights are chilly indeed. Soon a start is made, and after a fairly long journey the old familiar neighborhood is reached.

Caution has by this time become most necessary, and it is not long before the young beavers learn the cunning ways and deceitful snares of the trapper or the Indian, who sets great store on a fat "Ah-wa-hesha" as the Western Indians call the beaver kitten. Perhaps one or two of the happy babies who splashed in the quiet old pond have already enriched the hunter, sad to say.

Upon inspecting the home pond, they find great changes have taken place since the family left in the spring: the ice has carried away part of the dam, and the lodges show sad need of repairs. After a careful survey of the surroundings for signs of danger, the work begins. Now the kittens learn to employ more usefully and wisely the sharp, cutting teeth nature has given them.

First the old beavers cut down the trees, which fall with fearful crashing, the noise echoing far through the quiet woods. All the beavers flee to shelter till the danger is past, for the fate of an incautious beaver



GIANT COTTONWOOD TREE CUT DOWN BY BEAVERS.

*Courtesy of "Our Dumb Animals."*



two years before, who was caught by a falling tree, has made the old ones very careful. The young beavers now set to work cutting the smaller branches off, and soon they swim away with them to the dam, where they are then placed to the best advantage and plastered over with mud and woven roots and grass. Stones are then rolled into place in order to keep all tight and firm.

The reason for building the dam is to make the water rise to the required level, so that the colony may swim comfortably beneath the ice in winter, and may store beneath it a good supply of sticks for winter food. When the dam has been rebuilt and strengthened, the next task is to repair the family home, or lodge. First the old bedding of grass and branches is cleaned out. This is taken outside, and with a supply of new branches is heaped on the roof of the lodge. Over this is placed a fresh covering of mud-plaster, the same as that used for the dam, and thus the home is repaired for the long, cold winter to come.

The dining-rooms and refuges under the banks, called burrows or "washes," are enlarged or increased in number, and cleaned out. A full supply of branches and fresh sticks having been cut and laid in the deep pools or stuck into the bottom, all is now ready for the coming frosts, which soon put an end to work and leave the beavers locked completely under the heavy canopy of ice. For some time after this the beavers swim about under the ice prospecting for food, pulling up the great roots of the water-lilies and other plants, and dragging them to the burrows; but even this occasional treat cannot last long. Then the confinement has its effect on the beavers, who do less travelling and sleep much longer as the winter advances.

Towards the spring the supply of food will often become exhausted, and it is then necessary for the old beavers to seek a fresh supply. An outlet through the ice must be found or made, and then follows the very difficult and dangerous undertaking of travelling over the snow and felling some trees. All the enemies of the beaver are watching with the keenest expectancy for his first appearance in the spring.

The carnivorous animals are ravenous after their long fast; and the trapper, knowing that just now the beaver's coat is in its very best condition, will quickly discover, in his rounds through the woods, traces of new beaver work, and the footmarks in the snow will tell him all that is necessary. The hungry animal will come again to repeat its labors, but it must be cunning indeed if it would overcome the devices of the trapper.

Should the Guardian Spirit of the beaver protect its life through two more years, the parental nest is left, and the age of maturity brings its responsibilities, involving the building of a new lodge and the repetition of the various phases of life which for untold generations have gone on, in spite of the merciless slaughter which satisfies the whims of fashion or a thoughtless greed for wealth.

### Success.

BY JOHN E. DOLSEN.

Though thou mayst win the plaudits of the press,

Judge not by that thy measure of success.

Does thine own heart approve what thou hast done?

If not, thy real success must yet be won.

### A Lesson for April.

BY FLORENCE PHINNEY.

WHEN the rain is falling,  
When the skies are dun,  
April's only fooling;  
Here's the sun!

When our days are dreary,  
More of toil than play,  
That's the time for smiling  
Care away.

Don't you see the robin  
Singing in the rain,  
Welcoming the springtime  
Back again?

Oak and elm and willow  
All their buds unfold;  
See the snowdrop pushing  
Through the mold!

Then be brave, my children!  
Life is cloud and sun.  
When the hour is darkest,  
Morn's begun!

### Chocolate Drops and Motor Cars.

BY ELEANOR I. RAKESTRAW.

"YOU count it, Allen," said Victory Muller to her brother, as she emptied the contents of her bank on to the table.

Allen counted the dimes, nickels, and pennies. Just as he finished, the Mullers' friend, Ivy St. John, came in.

"Hello, Ivy," Allen called. "What do you think? Victory's to have her drawing set at last."

"Really?" Ivy smiled into Victory's eager little face. Then her eyes sought the tiny, bandaged foot on the footstool. "I'm glad. It'll help pass the time till you get well again. What a lot of money!"

"Two dollars exactly," said Allen. "Victory ought to get a pretty good set for that, don't you think?"

"I should think so," Ivy answered. "Who's to select it, Victory?"

Victory nodded toward her brother. "Allen is feet and hands and brains for me these days. He's a good buyer, too."

Allen patted her bright hair in his appreciation of her trust in him. "Maybe Ivy would like to help select the drawing set," he suggested.

"Oh, would you, Ivy?" said Victory, pleased. "That would be ever so nice. Two heads and two pairs of eyes could choose a splendid set."

"Of course," Ivy replied. "I'd love to help."

So presently Ivy and Allen set out. Victory, her wistful face pressed against the window-pane, watched them out of sight.

In the big department store the two friends found many interesting things. But, as neither of them had any money of their own, they soon asked for the drawing set.

The clerk set out the boxes, opening them and displaying the shiny compass and pencils, erasers, paper, and designs. "Here's one at one dollar and seventy-five cents; this set is two dollars, two and a half," and so on.

Allen examined the cheapest one.

"That," said the clerk, "is a very good outfit. It contains as many articles as any of the higher priced ones. Away from the

two-dollar one you couldn't tell the difference."

"It looks as good as the other," Allen studied a moment. "What do you think, Ivy?"

Ivy looked at the sets closely. "I couldn't tell why one is better than the other," she said.

"The difference is only a trifling one of material," the clerk told them. "Shall I wrap this one for you?"

"Yes," Allen replied, and counted out a dollar and seventy-five cents. "Now," as he took the package, "we have a quarter left over from our bargain. Anything you'd like, Ivy?" He felt proud of his ability as a shopper.

Ivy hesitated.

Allen smiled in a knowing manner. "All girls like chocolates. A twenty-five-cent box of chocolates, please." This to the clerk at the candy case.

"That's for you, Ivy," he told her gallantly, when the clerk handed out the candy.

Ivy thanked him with a smile.

"No," he shook his head when, out in the street, she proffered the open box, "I don't care for any." He felt that his giving all the candy to her justified his act in his own eyes, in Ivy's and in Victory's, too—but Victory need not know.

However, he soon forgot about the box of chocolates. They were nearing the Fifth Street bridge which, only two weeks before, had collapsed under several crowded excursion cars. A score or more persons had been injured, some fatally. It made Allen's blood boil when he thought about it.

"To think, Ivy," he said, as they stood watching the workmen, "that bridge was built only three or four years ago! When it was finished, it looked as if it would last half a century. Rotten material, of course! And Louis Rawson knew it. But what did he care, so he got a lot of money out of it! I can hardly wait till I'm a man. I want to tackle public affairs and clean them up."

Ivy shook her head soberly. Her father was mayor of the town, a man who always stood for a square deal. "It's no easy thing," she said. "Father fights continually men who, like Louis Rawson, scheme for poor streets, eggshell buildings, unsafe bridges, and things not clean and honest."

The two stepped back out of the way of a big automobile that slowed up, then, as the way was blocked, turned down a by-street. It was a luxurious car. The sun glistened on its brass trimmings and blazoned on its long, red body. It was driven by a liveried chauffeur. The other occupants were two women wrapped in furs.

Ivy's eyes sparkled as she looked after the car. She drew a quick breath at its splendor.

A frown puckered Allen's brow. "There go the wife and daughter of Louis Rawson."

The admiration in Ivy's face turned to indignation. "Bought by cheating the town with poor bridges, badly-paved streets, and just every way he can without being caught at it! I wouldn't ride in his car! I'd feel as if I was cheating, too."

"So would I," Allen replied, as they started on. "Maybe, though, it clears Rawson's conscience to have his folks enjoy his dishonest money, and to use little or none for himself. He's built them a fine house out on Michigan Avenue, too, they say."

"Well, I wouldn't stay in that house a single night, with all its finery," Ivy declared.



"When people trust you, you should treat them fairly."

"When we grow up, we'll have things all safe and sound, won't we, Ivy?" They were both very much in earnest.

Yet, as they neared the Muller home, both became unusually silent. Allen's thoughts returned to the candy. He wondered what Ivy thought about it, and what she expected to do with it in Victory's presence. He hated to have Victory know. For the first time in his life he realized how hard it was to get rid of a quarter's worth of chocolates in a half-hour. He looked with envy at every child they met as some one to whom they might give the box. Yet he could not suggest such a thing, for he had insisted the candy was Ivy's.

Presently he said: "Victory's drawing set is real nice, don't you think so? It looks every bit as good to me as the two-dollar one."

"Every bit," Ivy replied in a weak little voice.

"And the cheaper one will last Victory as long as she needs it. Don't—don't you care for your candy, Ivy?"

"Not now," changing the box from one hand to the other.

"I say, Ivy," he asked in desperation, "is it because I got it that way? Do you blame me?"

"I blame myself just as much," she admitted. "I wanted the candy, and I thought that, as long as you did the buying, I would be clear. But I guess I don't care for chocolate drops as I used to."

Allen's face was very sober. He refused to blame Ivy. "It's the first time I ever deceived Victory with something that looked as good, but of course was not as good. But a quarter is not much. If it had been enough to buy a car like Rawson's, it would be different."

Ivy looked at the box of candy. "I feel as guilty as if I was riding in his car," she said.

Suddenly Allen turned to her, the utmost consternation in his face. "Ivy St. John," he declared, "I believe I'm a grafter! I don't believe there's any difference between my cheating Victory and Rawson's cheating the city. And *he's* a grafter."

Ivy's face was distressed. It was plain that to her, as to Allen, the word "grafter" stood for all that was wicked and dishonest. "Well, then," she said hopelessly, "I'm one, too; for I tell you, Allen, I wanted the candy—before I got it."

"What had I better do?" Allen was becoming more and more penitent.

Ivy thought a moment. She looked at the box of untasted candy. "I think," she said, "that this belongs to Victory."

Allen drew a deep breath of relief. "Why, of course," he agreed. "We will give it to her, and tell her we bought it with her money."

They said no more until they turned in at the Mullers' gate. Then Allen, who had been thinking hard, said, "Don't you suppose, Ivy, that chocolate drops, when one is young, might grow into motor cars when one is a man?"

Ivy laughed once more light-heartedly. "That's a funny way of putting it, though I suspect it's true. But I don't believe they ever will for us—after to-day's lesson. We'll watch the chocolate drops too closely."

Victory, a bit later, absorbed in her "splendid" drawing set, did not seem to notice that neither Ivy nor Allen tasted the candy, or



SOME APRIL BABIES.

that, when she thanked them again and again, they turned away uncomfortably, with very red faces.

### The Goblin Inside.

A goblin lives inside me that wants to make a noise

(I think a goblin lives inside the most of little boys).

The people wouldn't "hush" at me if once they understood

I'm willing to be quiet—it's my goblin won't be good.

I mean to speak in whispers, as quiet as a mouse,

But my goblin simply loves to shriek and terrify the house:

He turns into a growly bear, or he turns into a train,

And it often takes a long, long time to turn him back again.

If I lived in the country, or somewhere by the shore,

Where I could let my goblin out to shout till he was sore,

He might grow tired of shouting, and let me softly speak,

But in the middle of the town he *always* wants to shriek.

J. H. MACNAIR,  
in *Lady's Pictorial*.

### The Useful Servant.

BY MARGARET BLAINE.

The Wallace children came in much excited. "Mother," they said, "Jimmie Turner was just determined to go with his big brother; and, when his mother said 'No,' he lay down on the floor and yelled, and said he would go, and she had to put him in his room and lock the door. And she said he was such a determined child, and she looked sorry."

"Mother," said Stan, who always tried to think things out, "when Jimmie was here the other day, and worked on that hard puzzle, and wouldn't give up, though he was

ever so tired, until he got it done, you said it was a good thing to have a stick-to-it spirit. Then is it bad to have it when you stick to things your mother doesn't want you to do?"

Mother laughed at Stan's shrewd suspicion. "Not exactly that," she said. "I believe a stick-to-it spirit is always a good thing to have. But it must be your servant, and not your master. Let me show you the difference with a little 'parable.' If you had a pony that would take you out to grandmother's house to-day, you would say he was a strong and willing pony. But suppose to-morrow when you saddled him, he should jump about, and turn the wrong way, and then run for miles, you wouldn't be pleased. Yet he ran just as far, but it was the wrong way. You want your pony to be a useful servant, and go where you direct him. You don't want him to be the master, and decide where he wishes to go. If you couldn't make him stop that, he would be useless.

"So your stick-to-it spirit must be the servant of your mind. You must decide what things are worth sticking to, and what things should be given up at once. While children are young, their parents are here to see that they do the right things. And you must know that parents are wiser than children. That is, while you are young, you should give up the things your parents decide are not good for you. But after a while you'll have to decide that all for yourself. If you have made that spirit your servant, you will be a persevering man, and you will succeed in doing worth-while things. If it has become your master, you will be merely a stubborn man, and not likely to amount to much. You see there is a great difference."

"Yes," said Stanley, "I see. And I'm going to be the persevering kind."

"So am I," said little sister. "I think stubborn people are so uncomfortable."

Happiness is reflective, like the light of Heaven; and every countenance bright with smiles and glowing with innocent enjoyment is a mirror transmitting to others the rays of a supreme and ever shining benevolence.

IRVING.



## THE BEACON.

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## From the Editor to You.

The easiest way is not often the best way for you and me. There is value in doing the hard thing, because it is generally best worth doing, and we are made stronger and more efficient when it is done. Then the hard things themselves become easy, and we are ready for the new task, the next step.

How hard it is, for instance, to learn to use a typewriter in the best way. You might sit down before one, hunt out each letter as you want to use it, and perhaps make a copy or write a message that could be read. You might do this over and over, and think you were doing well because you could use what you had written. Near you sits some one who is learning the touch system. Every sheet used is thrown away. Nothing is written that counts. Weeks go by, and hours of drudgery are spent; but the learner gains steadily, and finally masters the keyboard. You chose the easiest way, and always found the task hard. The other took the way of drudgery, of long, slow toil, and in the end becomes an expert, doing a hard thing easily and rapidly.

It is just the same in the realm of spirit. God means us to build our characters, to make them fine and true. The task seems hard: we want an easier lesson, want to stop trying and just drift along. Only the one who takes the long, slow, patient way of learning to control his temper, to speak the exact truth, to practise thinking about others before himself, gains in the end ease in doing these things.

One of the sentences of the faith we sometimes repeat in our Sunday schools is "Salvation by Character." It should help us to remember our part in the work of making ourselves ready for life here and hereafter. Sometimes people talk about an easy way of salvation. The only easy way is that hard one in which we work out our own salvation by keeping at it until it grows easy to do. One of our Unitarian poets, Henry W. Longfellow, wrote:

"Heaven is not reached by a single bound;  
But we build the ladder by which we rise  
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,  
And we mount to its summit round by round."

## Hands.

BY ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH.

The tasks and deeds are many that hands do;  
Some work, some idle, and some play;  
But blessed are the hands that make the earth  
A better place in which to stay!

THE BEACON CLUB. A LEAGUE OF  
BEACON READERS WHO ARE WILLING TO HELP.

[Letters for this department should be addressed to  
Editor of *The Beacon*, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.]

ALL our readers know of the President of our Unitarian Sunday School Society, Rev. William I. Lawrence. Many of you have seen him as he has visited our schools in various parts of the country. He has been travelling in the South and South-west, speaking to our churches in that part of our country. He congratulates us all on the success of our Beacon Club, its steadily growing membership, its interesting and helpful letters.

How many things we are all finding out about other Sunday schools than the one to which we belong! Here is one which has a motto, the first that has been reported.

SIoux CITY, IA.,  
Feb. 18, 1913.

Dear Miss Buck,—I belong to the Unitarian Sunday school of Sioux City, Ia. Our school has grown from sixty to one hundred since September, and we celebrated the event last Friday evening by having a banquet. Our motto is, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Our colors are blue and white.

I am interested in the Beacon Club and should like to know about it.

## News from Sunday Schools.

THE Sunday school at Chicopee, Mass., gave illumination to their Bible study on the Prophets by holding an "Art Sunday" session for the whole school. Sargent's paintings of the prophets were made the bases of two illustrated addresses concerning the life and work of these great figures in religious history.

The Sunday school at Sioux City, Ia., has increased its membership from sixty to one hundred since September 3.

## RECREATION CORNER.

## ENIGMA LII.

I am composed of 17 letters.  
My 9, 4, 12, 15, is a flower.  
My 5, 10, 16, 16, is dear to all girl hearts.  
My 2, 13, 7, is a pronoun.  
My 12, 3, 9, 14, 8, is to wait upon.  
My 5, 6, 11, 7, is part of a house.  
My 1, 4, 17, is a small child.  
My whole is a noted man.

DORIS E. TURNER.

## ENIGMA LIII.

I am composed of 14 letters.  
My 4, 2, 10, is what every boy is.  
My 1, 6, 7, is used to hold milk.  
My 12, 6, 9, 13, is used to hold water.  
My 8, 11, 12, is something to spin.  
My 5, 2, 14, is a part of the body.  
My 12, 9, 3, is used to hold things together.  
My whole is the capital of a European country.

LOWELL F. KENNEDY.

## LETTER PUZZLE.

I am composed of 6 letters.  
Take one-fourth of pine, one-fifth of lemon, one-third of ink, two-fifths of school, one-sixth of animal.  
My whole is a prophet of the Old Testament.

By { ANNIE SHEINKER.  
LEONA CHURCHILL.

I am nine years old.

Yours truly,  
CLARISSA H. HOSKIN,  
1415 West 19th Street.

The editor congratulates the Sioux City school on its fine growth and its spirit of unity and loyalty as shown in its motto and school colors. Clarissa's letter gives us a new glimpse of Sunday school life, and admits her as a member of our club.

74 TAYLOR STREET, WOLLASTON, MASS.,  
Feb. 23, 1913.

To the Editor of the Beacon:

I am sending an enigma which I made up myself. I enjoy *The Beacon* so much, especially the enigmas. I am a member of the Wollaston Unitarian Sunday school. Our lessons are very interesting. They are about the country where Jesus lived. We are studying now about Palestine, and the people have such queer customs it is very interesting to know about them. I should like very much to be a Beacon member. I think the idea of having a Beacon Club is very nice.

Sincerely yours,  
DORIS E. TURNER.

Thank you, Doris, for your letter and the puzzle. How many other members of our Sunday schools are studying the book in our *Beacon Series* called "The Bible and the Bible Country"?

## CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.

In carriage, but not in wagon.  
In paper, but not in cloth.  
In Capricorn, but not in Cancer.  
In West Point, but not in Harvard.  
In skates, but not in sleds.  
In ice, but not in water.  
In donkey, but not in mule.  
In board, but not in plank.  
In bottle, but not in can.  
In black, but not in white.  
In ceiling, but not in floor.  
In floor, but not in wall.  
In Tom, but not in James.  
In fight, but not in battle.  
In summit, but not in foot.  
In Rochambeau, but not in Burnside.  
In loose, but not in tight.  
In basket, but not in box.  
In carrot, but not in parsley.  
My whole was an English explorer.

ROBERT C. LITCHFIELD.

## RIMING ENIGMA.

The initials of these words, when they are rightly guessed and placed one beneath the other, spell the name of a prophet. Each word has five letters.

1. Rimes with proffer. 2. Rimes with found. 3. Rimes with falter. 4. Rimes with brown. 5. Rimes with sinner. 6. Rimes with flashes. 7. Rimes with board.

Pilgrim Visitor.

## ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NO. 26.

ENIGMA XLVIII.—The Invention of the Steam-boat.

ENIGMA XLIX.—The History of the United States.  
A RIDDLE.—The Postman.

Answers to Enigmas No. XXXVIII. and No. XXXIX. have been received from Helen Park of Denver, Col., who has also sent us an enigma which will appear in a later number.

"It isn't any fun bein' a kid," observed a boy, bitterly. "You always have to go to bed when you're not sleepy, an' get up when you are."

Exchange.